

VZCZCXRO7355
PP RUEHBZ RUEH DU RUEHMR RUEHPA RUEHRN RUEHTRO
DE RUEHOR #0665/01 2321629
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 201629Z AUG 09
FM AMEMBASSY GABORONE
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5980
INFO RUEHZO/AFRICAN UNION COLLECTIVE
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 0235
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 0218
RUEHPH/CDC ATLANTA GA
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RUEAUSA/DEPT OF HHS WASHINGTON DC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC
RUCNFB/FBI WASHINGTON DC
RHMFISS/HQ USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 0426
RHEHNSC/WHITE HOUSE NSC WASHINGTON DC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 GABORONE 000665

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/20/2019
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [SENV](#) [MASS](#) [ETRD](#) [KHIV](#) [EAID](#) [MARR](#) [EINV](#)
ASEC, SNEV, BC
SUBJECT: A SMART POWER SUCCESS STORY IN AFRICA -- THE CASE
OF BOTSWANA

Classified By: Ambassador Stephen J. Nolan;
Reason: 1.4 (B,D)

Summary

¶1. (C) The U.S.-Botswana partnership is a model for what smart power could achieve in Africa. Over four decades, Botswana has invested in its people, promoted independent institutions, and trained and deployed a civilian-controlled military for national development priorities. We have multiplied the reach and impact of official USG assistance by encouraging partnerships between Botswana and U.S. foundations, leading U.S. universities, NGOs, and the private sector, and helped to convene regional actors to address complex challenges. To take public health as an example, the results of this collaboration are remarkable: over 80 percent of Botswana who require HIV treatment are receiving it and 96 percent of babies born to HIV-infected women are free of the virus. In other areas -- democratic stability and rule of law, economic management, and environmental protection -- we are following the same inclusive smart power approach with positive results in Botswana and throughout the sub-Saharan region. End summary.

¶2. (C) This is the first in a series of cables that will address the strategic value of the U.S.-Botswana partnership. Subsequent messages will focus in more detail on the thematic areas outlined below, on the prospects for a "coalition for change" of like-minded countries within the Southern African Development Community (SADC), and offer suggestions for increased U.S.-Botswana engagement.

Facilitating Public Health Cooperation

¶3. (SBU) Our partnership with the GOB on PEPFAR works because the GOB has upheld its side of the partnership bargain, spending an estimated USD 754 million of Botswana government funds on HIV/AIDS since 2005. In turn, we have invested some USD 390 million since 2005 to support them,

implemented through Peace Corps, CDC, USAID, DOD, and the State Department. The strong USG-GOB partnership has encouraged Harvard, Baylor, Johns Hopkins, and the University of Pennsylvania to join us, providing the GOB management and clinical experience, knowledge, and financial backing. The universities also cooperate not only with the GOB but also with the Bill and Melinda Gates, Merck, and Clinton foundations, all of whom are active here. The World Bank and Global Fund lend essential multilateral dimensions and expertise to the fight. The results are astounding: the GOB has virtually eliminated mother-to-child transmission of HIV; over 80 percent of Batswana who need anti-retroviral therapy get it; and new HIV infections appear to be slowing. The struggle remains intense because 24 percent of Batswana are HIV positive and 131,000 people are on therapy, illustrating the power of partners working towards a common strategic objective.

Exporting Democratic Stability and the Rule of Law

14. (C) Our security cooperation with the GOB promotes Botswana's long-standing civilian control of the military and its deployment to national development tasks. Over 90 percent of the BDF's senior leadership are U.S.-trained through IMET. The BDF responds to civilian direction and trains to combat environmental degradation (primarily poaching), respond to disasters, and fight wildfires. The BDF has now developed strong ties to smaller SADC states like Lesotho and Swaziland, whose soldiers it now routinely trains. Botswana's partnership with the North Carolina

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National Guard since 2008 has enriched the most active military-to-military relationship within the Africa Command and fostered additional civilian linkages, including on tourism, education, and disaster response. We also leverage USG security assistance through our partnership with the GOB in the International Law Enforcement Academy (ILEA) outside Gaborone, where the USG trains law enforcement personnel from 29 African countries. Adding to the regional impact of our rule of law collaboration, the International Broadcasting Bureau, based in Selebi-Phikwe, transmits VOA broadcasts on key policy issues throughout the continent.

Sound Economic Management

15. (SBU) The GOB's success over 40 years in managing significant diamond wealth and investing in its country and its people has attracted just praise. A combination of correct and consistent long-term policies, independent institutions, and strong executive leadership through several presidencies is the crux of the diamond success story. A GOB joint venture with DeBeers ensured considerable diamond revenues flowed to GOB coffers, the independent Bank of Botswana invested the proceeds, and the GOB drew on them to invest in people, education, and infrastructure. The USG is providing a USD 250 million OPIC loan guaranty to help create a diamond cutting and polishing industry in Botswana, which should ensure that more of the value of the resource stays here instead of transferring overseas, and promote highly skilled jobs for locals. Outside of the diamond realm, EX-IM and USTDA are considering support for power projects that could help make Botswana a net energy exporter. The Mission also hosts the USAID-funded "Trade Hub" for Southern Africa to help SADC convene regional experts and facilitate regional economic integration. The private and not-for-profit sectors are responding to this climate: a private not-for-profit hospital with U.S. (Operating Rooms International and Vanderbilt University) and local insurance partners will open here in November.

Protecting the Natural Heritage

¶6. (SBU) Botswana is a semi-arid country that values water conservation; through USAID, we are helping Botswana to partner with its neighbors on sustainable trans-boundary water management in the Okavango and Zambezi river basins. Botswana was the first African country to qualify for Tropical Forest Conservation Act benefits. In 2006, our governments signed an agreement which combines USD 7 million in debt relief with USD 8.3 million for conservation of Botswana's forests, to be administered through a locally created trust fund, overseen by a Board with representatives from the USG and GOB. Botswana has chosen a high-cost, low-volume tourism strategy to allow tourists to experience the country's beauty without destroying it. Public education and awareness activities are being undertaken by the GOB and by private environmental organizations, and in the last decade there has been an increase in community participation in natural resource management. Symbolizing the country's commitment to the environment, Botswana's President Ian Khama serves on the board of the leading environmental NGO Conservation International, based in the United States, and plays an active role in its deliberations.

Taking the Partnership to the Next Level

¶7. (C) Botswana is a model for how the USG can use smart power in Africa with genuine partners to promote collaboration, leverage official USG resources, and achieve

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common goals. Mission Gaborone's operational goals going forward include:

--Promoting a more pragmatic and operationally relevant role for SADC in addressing regional challenges.

--Ensuring our relationship with the GOB's Department of Intelligence and Security strengthens our understanding of regional dynamics.

--Strengthening our collaboration with the BDF, a military engaged on health, environmental, and human security issues to the benefit of its country and peace in the region, including by working with the North Carolina National Guard State partnership program.

--Leveraging existing and new public-private health care partnerships, including through the North Carolina National Guard State Partnership program, to assist the GOB meet its strategic health objectives.

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